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A GIRL GENERAL

She Displayed Military Genius Unconsciously

By TIMOTHY L. DODGE

"It's all very well to educate a man in the science of war," said the old veteran, "but if he hasn't got the faculties in him that go to make a leader his education won't do him any good. We had a lot of book generals in the war between the states, and we had some born generals. The former did a lot of harm, and the latter—well, the latter did a lot of harm to the enemy."

"You wouldn't expect to find military talents in a woman, would you? Well, I spent four years under generals of all kinds, and the genius for war that came most particularly under my observation was displayed by a girl."

"In the spring of 1862, when the army I was with was at Shelbyville, Tenn., my captain told me that there was a call from general headquarters for some one to go south on secret service—learn what force of Confederates was occupying the territory south of



"I recognized the girl I had left an hour before."

us and come back with the information. I was a private in those days and anxious to do something by which I might gain promotion. I thought that if I gained the information to enable the general to carry out any plans he might have I could count on his influence. So I volunteered and was ordered to report at headquarters. The general questioned me, and evidently making up his mind to try me told me to scout southward and learn so far as I could just what Confederate forces were between him and the Tennessee river. He was intending to make a forced march with a view to cutting a railroad. He left me free to go in uniform or in citizen's dress, as I pleased. I concluded that I could get farther south and learn more by assuming to be a southerner, so I chose to go in citizen's dress.

"I confess I didn't like the prospect of being detected as a Yankee soldier in disguise within the enemy's lines hunting for information, for I was pretty sure in that case to be hanged for a spy. Besides, I was starting at night, which is just the time a man's cloak is at the lowest ebb. I rode most of the night and early in the morning stopped at the outskirts of a town called Fayetteville.

"Those towns down there were sure to sympathize with one side or the other. Shelbyville was largely in favor of the Federals; in Fayetteville they were all Confederates. I didn't know this at the time, and I didn't take precautions. I stopped at a house and asked for some breakfast, for which I paid in greenbacks. This excited suspicion; the woman of the house played Union and drew a confession from me that I was of the same persuasion. If there had been a man about I would have been in trouble right off. As it was, I thought it best to mount my horse and get away.

"I went on southward, talking with the people I met, telling them that I had come from Shelbyville and had left a force of Yankees there. Then I asked them about 'our fellows' and got all they knew. At noon I stopped at a farmhouse, and this time I struck a Union family sure enough. The father was away serving with an east Tennessee Federal regiment. There were a mother, a daughter about twenty years old and some small children.

"I soon found that it was safe to confide in these people and confessed myself a Union man. I also told the daughter just what I was—a spy. She caught her breath and bit her lip, knowing full well what my fate would be if caught.

"I have never known such quick cases of love between the sexes as during that war. Perhaps the girls, being country bred, had not met any men except country bumpkins and were the more easily attracted to a different

THE TWISTED VINE

A Story of the Orinoco

By CLARISSA MACKIE

It was very quiet in that jungle along the upper reaches of the Orinoco river.

Charles Goodell, orchid hunter for a rich Philadelphia collector, stood on the high bank of the river and looked longingly up at the cluster of mauve orchids clinging to the top of a rotted tree trunk that overhung the river. It was a lofty tree, and, bowed with disease and age, it bent its head, decked with the delicate butterfly blossoms, over the silt-laden river that it would bridge when it crashed down in the hurricane season.

Goodell's Carib Indians had refused to climb the tree and were now squatting sullenly around a little fire on which a bird was cooking.

The mauve orchids tempted Goodell beyond discretion. He decided to mount the tree and secure them himself, although he knew the risk he ran in doing so.

If the tree should fall under his weight he would be flung into the river, a prey to the vicious alligators or the venomous snakes that abounded.

But the securing of this particular specimen would not only be a triumph, but it meant a liberal sum of money added to the store he was saving up for a home and the girl he expected to make his wife on his return.

He had examined the orchid through his fieldglasses, and he was convinced that it was the long lost specimen that Mr. Clay, his employer, had offered \$20,000 for. There were the delicate mauve outer leaves with the hearts of flaming crimson and orange, with marvelous striplings of black.

There were two ways of reaching the mauve orchids. One was to climb the tree trunk with the risk of weighting it down to destruction when he reached the upper part. This way was hindered by a tangle of great vines that

"The road struck the river at the ford and we started in to cross it single file. Two of my captors preceded and two followed me. There was a ledge just below the ford which my captors had cautioned me against, calling my attention to the fact that the running water would deceive me as to the direction I needed to take. She told me that if I didn't keep well upstream I would go over the ledge into deep water.

"I soon saw that the first man in line, the corporal, was heading too far downstream. When he reached the middle of the river he went over the ledge and I saw him no more. The next man was frightened, but headed his horse farther upstream. I wished I could go over the ledge and be drowned, to save myself from a hanging. I was turning my horse in that direction when the man next in my rear, who had come up beside me, seized my bridle rein.

"When I was looking him in the face I saw a round hole appear in his forehead. He fell from his horse and was swept away with the current. He had been shot, but who had shot him was a mystery. I glanced to the opposite bank and saw a little cloud of smoke, but no one who had fired a shot.

"Two of the four men were now eliminated. The man behind me was a brave fellow. He spurred forward and, drawing his revolver, ordered me to proceed. But we hadn't gone six yards before I heard a crack, and at the same time my man fell from his saddle. Where he was hit I did not know, but if he wasn't killed he was doubtless drowned.

"Turning my head, I saw the fourth man urging his horse as fast as he could through the rapid current toward the southern shore. He had evidently had enough of trying to run me into camp and was trying to save himself from the invisible marksman.

"I was now free as a bird, and it didn't take long for me to gather my faculties sufficiently to understand that some one had saved me from my captors, though I was not quite sure but that I would be the next victim. However, I lost no time in pushing forward to the northern side of the river, and my horse carried me up the steep ascent on to the bank. There I looked about me and at the base of a tree saw a girl lying on the ground, with a rifle beside her. I spurred toward her, dismounted and recognized the girl I had left not an hour before.

"She was in a dead faint, but I picked her up and kissed her back to consciousness.

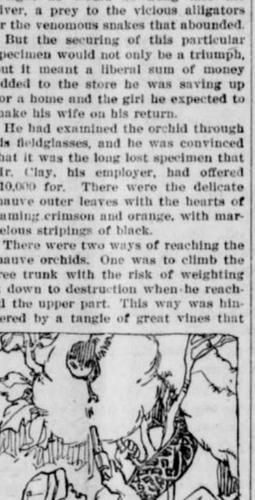
"She had seen me captured and my captors start for the river. Her military eye had taken in the situation at once. Running home, she had got a rifle, and returning lay in concealment with a view to attacking the enemy while crossing the stream. Seeing the leader heading too far down, she had waited till he fell over the ledge; then, taking advantage of the confusion, she had opened fire.

"There are many instances in history where generals have seized upon just such a moment to rout an enemy, but this is the only affair of the kind that came under my own personal observation. Besides, it saved my life.

"I got the girl back to her house and then pushed my horse to his utmost to place as many miles as possible between me and that region. Fortunately I eluded those on the watch for me and got my information in to the general. He commended me highly for my work and recommended me to the governor of my state for a commission."

"What became of the girl?" asked one of the listeners.

"Our force advanced as soon as I got to camp, and I saw her again frequently. After the war I went down there and married her."



"The bullet went over its head. It must be cut through with a machete before he could reach the coveted prize.

The other way was to climb up the great twisted vine that hung downward from the very point where the orchids clung to the tree. The vine swung almost within his reach now, and its lower end touched the surface of the water.

"The twisted vine," he decided at last, and, tossing aside his hat, he pulled on heavy gaiters, saw that his leather puttees covered every exposed portion of his lower limbs and took hold of the twisted vine.

His Indians gathered around the tree with the eager curiosity of children in the performance of his difficult feat. As he pulled himself up by the strength of his massive arms and shoulders his legs and feet were twined about the thick vine.

Suddenly the Indians uttered shrill cries of alarm and disappeared in the jungle.

Goodell, glancing down, saw nothing to frighten them, and, noting that his specimens were safe, went stolidly up on his perilous climb; the vine swayed now and then under his weight, but its upper tendrils appeared to be firmly fastened to the tree trunk, while its roots were strongly entrenched in the river bottom.

Goodell did not know when he felt a change in the character of the vine up which he was climbing with the orchids ever growing nearer to his eager touch.

First the twisted vine had been slightly rough, but its bark appeared to be smooth now, sometimes almost slippery to the touch, and once Goodell would have sworn that it moved. But it was cold and clammy. Once his face touched it, and he drew back with a feeling of sickening revulsion. He felt faint and dizzy, and he closed his eyes.

When he opened them again it was to confront the real horror of the situation.

No wonder his Caribs had fled!

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terror. Later they would come back, peering fearfully to gain possession of the specimen cases because their employer would never need them again.

The heavy vine twisted upward in the orchids now only fifteen feet above his head. He looked at them with starting eyes because away above them was the monstrous, threatening head of a bon constrictor whose great body was twined around the vine to which he clung.

How his keen eyes had failed to detect the body of the great snake as it twisted up and around the large trunk of the giant vine he never knew.

Death stared him in the face. If he dropped into the river the monster's tail could catch him ere he fell, and, falling in that, the deadly water serpents would put him out of existence.

Already the body moved sluggishly, but his fascinated eyes did not leave the hideous head among the orchids. The flat eyes regarded him with cold interest; the ugly mouth grinned.

He heard the distant shouts of his Indians. Even if they had come to him they could not help him.

His first downward movement would be the signal for the beginning of the end.

He closed his eyes and prayed. He thought of his mother and of Alice Blake, the girl he was to marry.

His grip loosened on the twisted vine, so dreadfully imbued with life; his feet slipped.

The vine moved.

He looked up and saw that the ugly head was lowered.

Again he slipped down and again the vine moved.

Cold sweat broke out on his body and his face dripped.

Now he bent his body and looked down at the tail of the serpent. It had loosened from the vine and was moving to and fro like the pendulum of a clock.

Death above and death below! Well, he would fight.

His hand found his revolver, and he wriggled around until he could see the head again.

It had flattened itself among the orchids and was regarding him coldly as before. He would wait until it lifted again, and when his throat was presented to view he would try to blow the head off. It would be difficult at that distance with a single shot, and the death agonies of the reptile might involve his own death.

Goodell closed his eyes again and muttered a prayer as the strongest men do in moments of danger. The head was lifting again and resumed his swaying movement. Higher, higher it went, until the mottled throat was revealed.

"Spit!"

The bullet went over its head. His arm was wrenched; he must try again. Again he raised the automatic revolver, and again it sounded on the heavy jungle air.

"Spit!"

The head of the reptile wagged violently and all outlines were lost as the bullet found its mark. The great body trembled violently, the tail lashed to and fro, and the vine slipped downward.

Charles Goodell slipped down, his eyes ever on the horrid specter of the descending head.

Once he glanced below and saw that the tail was lashing the water. He took courage and slipped farther down. The great body of the dying reptile came down with him.

Three feet above the river bank he could stand the horror no longer, and he dropped, clutching at a young green vine that swung harmlessly near.

The green vine held and broke his fall. He swung violently to and fro and when a favorable opportunity presented itself he loosened his hold and fell upon the ground close beside his heap of specimen cases. Then he fainted away for the first time in his adventurous life.

He recovered consciousness almost immediately, for the shots had brought back his frightened Indians, and they gathered about him with scared looks and pointing fingers.

He took out his emergency flask and restored in a measure his shattered nerves. He sent them to the river to look at the dead carcass of the bon constrictor, but always they came back and gazed at him as though upon a spirit from another world.

Looking at his watch, he found that three hours had passed since he had climbed the twisted vine. It had seemed like fifteen minutes. No wonder he felt like an old man under the consuming fear of those three horrible hours.

The continued wonder of his guides excited his impatience, and he drew out a pocket mirror and looked at himself.

His face peered at him pale and haggard. His abundant hair was white as snow.

The wondering Indians now climbed the tree without protest, and the mauve orchids which had blanched Goodell's hair to obtain were packed away in the specimen cases, and the little expedition turned down the river.

Many weeks later Charles Goodell appeared in Philadelphia and delivered his consignment of valuable orchids to his employer. But the case of mauve orchids came last.

"How about these?" demanded Mr. Clay eagerly.

"Those," said Goodell slowly, "are the price of my nerve and a portion of my youth. I shall never hunt another orchid, Mr. Clay. The price of the mauve orchids is \$25,000."

"I will pay it," said the rich man quickly, "and afterward you may tell me the reason why you value them so highly."

So Charles Goodell told him the story of the twisted vine as I have told it to you.

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